



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Agenda

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager 860-441-6630

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Kevin Power, Representatives Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Christopher J. Burns, Michael Collins, Nancy M. Congdon, Warren T. Cooper, Luanne E. DeMatto, Syma Ebbin, Peter Fairbank, Nancy E. Gilly, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Keith L. Hedrick, Damon Q. Helme, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Elizabeth Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Karen F. Morton, Scott Newsome, Dana C. Parfitt, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Kristen L. Powers, Don Pratt, Betty A. Prochaska, Sandry Ramos-Morales, John F. Scott IV, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Jennifer Smuts, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, and Robert A. Warn

Wednesday, November 10, 2010

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

Regular Meeting

- A. ROLL CALL
- B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2010
- D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS
- E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS
- F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:
 - 1. Financial report
 - 2. Monthly briefing
- G. LIAISON REPORTS
- H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE

2010-0195 Groton Long Point Police Budget - Request for Supplemental Appropriation

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A TRANSFER FROM CONTINGENCY FOR THE GROTON LONG POINT POLICE DEPARTMENT

WHEREAS, during its deliberations on the FYE 2011 budget the Representative Town Meeting voted to reduce Groton Long Point's police budget by \$208,000, and

WHEREAS, the Groton Long Point Board subsequently voted to reduce its public safety budget by \$80,000 and pay the remaining \$128,000 through an increase in the district's mill rate, and

WHEREAS, prior to this decision, the president of the Groton Long Point Board had requested supplemental funding from the Town of Groton in the amount of \$128,000, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has authorized a Town-wide police assessment in an effort to bring Groton Long Point, City of Groton, and Town of Groton representatives to the table to discuss police services, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council felt that Groton Long Point's request for supplemental funding should

be addressed separately from the Town-wide police assessment, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that a transfer of \$128,000 be made from the FYE 2011 General Fund's Contingency account (#10741-5499) to Groton Long Point's police account (#10910-5230).

Refer to RTM.

Legislative History

9/21/2010 Mayor Referred Town Council Committee of the W

9/28/2010 Town Council Committee of the Whole Recommended for a Resolution

The Town Manager noted the reductions to the Groton Long Point police budget during FYE 2011 budget deliberations by the Town Council and RTM. Bob Congdon, president of the Groton Long Point Association, was present to address the Council.

Mr. Congdon noted that Groton Long Point pays its fair share of taxes and receives very few services. Groton Long Point's budget was submitted with a 0% increase. He feels that the RTM's reduction was a mistake.

Councilor Sheets asked if the Town Manager will submit a request for Groton Long Point's police budget in the FYE 2012 budget. The Town Manager stated that if a figure is submitted by Groton Long Point, he is obligated to include it in his budget.

Councilor O'Beirne feels this is an issue of fairness and Groton Long Point was treated differently than the City of Groton. He feels the Town Council should reconsider.

9/28/2010 Town Council Committee of the Whole Motion

to make a \$128,000 supplemental appropriation for the Groton Long Point police budget.

Councilor Monteiro echoed the fairness issue. She noted a public perception that the Town is paying for extra services in Groton Long Point. The Town only pays what it would cost the Town to provide the service. Councilor Watson agreed and mentioned that Groton Long Point and the City agreed during budget deliberations to participate in a Police Assessment. Mr. Congdon explained that the Groton Long Point district mill rate was raised to cover the budget shortfall. Councilor Flax feels that a fair process has already taken place and it is not right to try to overturn the RTM's action. Councilors Johnson and Sheets and Mayor Streeter expressed support for the motion. Mayor Streeter noted that the supplemental appropriation will have to go to the RTM for approval. Councilor Peruzzotti expressed concern with expending contingency funds so early in the fiscal year when the future is unknown. The decision could be made later in the fiscal year. Mr. Congdon noted the supplemental appropriation request is also "part of the process." Councilor Kolnaski stated she did not agree with the RTM's action, but they will have another chance to consider this.

Councilor Watson asked how the funds will be used since residents are already being taxed. Mr. Congdon indicated the funds will go back in the police budget

10/5/2010 Town Council Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken

10/5/2010 Town Council Adopted as Amended and Referred Representative Town Meeting

Councilor O'Beirne stated that there has been some confusion, but the source of money for this resolution should either be a supplemental appropriation from the General Fund balance or a transfer from the Contingency account.

Councilor Peruzzotti will be voting against this resolution, as she believes that this matter does not need to be addressed immediately.

Councilor Johnson stated that it is a matter of fairness.

The Town Manager explained the difference between the General Fund balance and Contingency and noted that the current General Fund balance is 7.2%, which is below the 7.5% guideline that the Council adopted. The Town Manager's suggestion is to utilize the Contingency Fund. Regardless of the funding source, if adopted, this item will proceed to the RTM.

Councilor Sheets noted that the cut to Groton Long Point's Police Department budget was done without planning or preparation, and stated that this is a matter of principle.

Councilor Flax will be voting against this resolution because he believes that the political process was followed. He is afraid that passing this resolution will open a "can of worms" where budgetary matters are concerned.

Councilor Monteiro stated that she would agree with Councilor Flax if the RTM was removed from the process altogether, but, if passed, this resolution will be referred to the RTM.

In answer to a query, the Town Manager replied that he does not think bond ratings will be affected if the General Fund is used.

Councilor Johnson remarked that Groton Long Point residents are taxpayers and the Town Police do not patrol there. He believes that this appropriation is equivalent to the cost for the Town to police that area.

Mayor Streeter stated that this resolution does not usurp the authority of the RTM because, if passed, the resolution will be referred to the RTM. He is, however, disappointed that the town-wide police assessment was not completed before this resolution came to a vote.

MOTION TO AMEND to replace the entire resolution with a new one previously prepared by the Town Manager that stipulates the funding source as a transfer from the General Fund's Contingency account was made by Councilor O'Beirne, seconded by Councilor Sheets.

VOTE on Motion to Amend passed 6 In Favor, 2 Opposed (Opposed: Councilors Flax and Peruzzotti).

10/13/2010 Representative Town Meeting Referred RTM Finance Committee

Rep. Pasqualini raised a "Point of Order" stating that he believes the actions of the Town Council are improper and constitute a violation of the Town Charter. He noted that the action of the RTM was very clear during budget deliberations and that this item was voted on twice. He feels that the use of Contingency Funds are for expenses that are not anticipated during the budget process or for unforeseen events. He provided examples such as severe winter weather and hurricanes. He believes that this item should not be referred to an RTM committee, nor any action taken until a Town Attorney opinion can be obtained to review the intent and interpretation of the Charter as it pertains to the budget process, and proper uses of the Contingency Fund.

Moderator Power clarified that a "Point of Order" is a non-debatable motion, and not open for discussion. He noted that the individual raising the "Point of Order" is entitled to state his reason and then the Moderator can make a decision. He stated that he agreed with the points made by Rep. Pasqualini but that procedurally the "Point of Order" is not a valid motion. He reiterated that he is referring this to the RTM Finance Committee and it will be on the November meeting agenda.

**11/1/2010 RTM Finance Committee Recommended for
Disapproval**

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Pratt

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Swindell

4. RECREATION - Chairman Warn

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman Parfitt

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Collins

2010-0217 Supplemental Appropriation for River Road Construction

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR RIVER ROAD REPAIRS

WHEREAS, approximately 150 linear feet of River Road was damaged by flooding in March 2010, closing the road to through traffic, and

WHEREAS, current estimates are \$30,000 to purchase materials that would allow the road to be opened to alternating one-way traffic and \$195,000 to make permanent repairs to the road, and

WHEREAS, funds are not available in the current operating budget to repair the damaged portion of River Road, and

WHEREAS, there are completed capital projects that can be closed out with their remaining funds returned to the Capital Reserve Fund Balance, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that a supplemental appropriation of \$225,000 be appropriated from the Capital Reserve Fund Balance as a FYE 2011 road project for River Road repairs.

Refer to RTM, Rule 6.5.3.

Legislative History

10/7/2010	Mayor	Referred	Town Council Committee of the W
10/12/2010	Town Council Committee of the Whole	Discussed	

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, noted a public information meeting was held last Wednesday on River Road repairs. This request is for a supplemental appropriation to purchase equipment for a temporary solution (one-way alternating traffic) and to fund permanent repairs. Staff looked at renting the required concrete barriers, but it is more cost effective to purchase them. Mr. Schneider noted that no major changes to the road are anticipated as a result of the permanent repairs. At the public information meeting, neighbors expressed a concern with installation of a guard rail system. Staff is looking at design and legal liability issues. A wetlands permit will be required to remove materials downstream. Mr. Schneider reviewed other design details and neighbors' comments. The supplemental appropriation must be approved by the RTM and because this is a scenic road, The Town Council must hold a public hearing on the improvements. Construction is expected to begin in late winter/early spring and be completed by August.

Councilor Johnson asked about reimbursement from FEMA. Mr. Schneider noted that permit requirements may drive betterments beyond what FEMA will pay for. Councilor O'Beirne noted this repair/replacement is not going to solve the flooding problems in Old Mystic.

The Town Manager explained that in order to move ahead and get the temporary solution in place before winter, Public Works will expend the \$30,000 from its operating budget. If the supplemental appropriation is approved, Public Works' account will be reimbursed. Councilor O'Beirne suggested asking the RTM for an expedited process.

The Town Manager explained that supplemental funds will come from the Capital Reserve Fund after capital projects are closed out.

10/12/2010	Town Council Committee of the Whole	Recommended for a Resolution	
10/19/2010	Town Council	Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken	
10/19/2010	Town Council	Adopted and referred under Rule 6.5.3	Representative Town Meeting

Councilor O'Beirne requested that this item be expedited.

The Town Manager stated that the RTM received all the background information for this project at its last meeting, and the Town Clerk noted that by referring this item under RTM Rule 6.5.3, it will be expedited. This rule allows the RTM to act on an item at its next regular meeting.

Councilor Johnson stated that, in his opinion, FEMA should be reimbursing 75% of this item.

10/20/2010	Representative Town Meeting	Referred under Rule 6.5.3	RTM Public Works Committee
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7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Scott

I. OTHER BUSINESS**2010-0181 FYE2012 Budget Discussion****FYE2012 BUDGET DISCUSSION****Legislative History****8/18/2010 Representative Town Meeting Discussed**

Rep. Kotowski requested that a standing referral be added to the RTM agenda under "Other Business" to enable budget discussion. She feels this will allow the RTM to establish goals and identify items to be reduced or eliminated in next year's budget prior to the budget deliberations. She would like to initiate communication with the Town Manager, Board of Education and Town Council before the Manager's proposed budget is finished. She suggests that a budget be developed that would not increase taxes for Groton taxpayers. She commented that taxes in Groton have increased more than any other Town in the region. She mentioned that many residents of her district are suffering as a result of the economic downturn. She observed that union employees of the Town voted twice and rejected concessions to the Town.

Moderator Power stated that a standing referral will appear on the agenda. This will allow discussion prior to budget deliberations in May. He mentioned that this was done last year.

10/13/2010 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

Rep. Kotowski expressed her concern in regard to the raises authorized for the School Central Office administrative employees which range from 5% to 17%. She believes that the Town and Board of Education (BOE) should be fiscally responsible during the current economic situation.

Rep. Massett requested that department heads be invited to the RTM meetings so that they can specify the impact on specific services or items in accordance with reductions that the RTM may recommend during the budget process. She gave several figures as examples.

The Moderator acknowledged that department heads can be invited to address the RTM concerning next year's budget.

Rep. Swindell believes that the disparity between private and public sector wages needs to be addressed. He asked for a freeze on wages for employees and suggested that the Town initiate contact with the unions now for next year's budget. He believes that the mill rate should not increase for next year. He asked for information on what services would be impacted by layoffs and mentioned that the private sector has suffered layoffs, reduced hours and furloughs.

Rep. Morton would like to develop an RTM recommendation by consensus that the Manager and Town Council provide a budget with a zero mill rate increase.

Rep. Ambrose stated that Social Security payments will not be increased this year. He noted that election results in November may impact both State and Federal budgets which subsequently affect municipalities.

School Superintendent Paul Kadri addressed the wage increases for the Central Office administrative staff. He emphasized that the BOE delivered a zero percent budget increase this year but in order to maintain student success and teacher performance, it is impossible to sustain a zero percent budget increase year after year. He volunteered to meet with RTM members in order to provide details about the phase two school construction projects prior to a referendum.

J. ADJOURNMENT